



Suspension and Exclusion Policy

Updated: July 2025

Approved by Trustees: 14 July 2025

Review Date: July 2026

Updates since the previous version:

- *Changes to references to governor involvement to reflect new Governance arrangements*

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1. Aims

Our Trust aims to ensure that:

- The suspensions and exclusions process are applied fairly and consistently.
- The suspensions and exclusions process are understood by those in governance roles, staff, parents and pupils
- Pupils in school are safe and happy
- Pupils do not become NEET (not in education, employment or training)

2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on statutory guidance from the Department for Education: Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units (PRUs) in England.

It is based on the following legislation, which outline schools' powers to exclude pupils:

- Section 52 of the Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012
- Sections 64-68 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

In addition, the policy is based on:

- Part 7, chapter 2 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which looks at parental responsibility for excluded pupils
- Section 579 of the Education Act 1996, which defines 'school day'
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. The decision to exclude

Only the Executive Leads for the Trust or the Headteacher can suspend or exclude a pupil from school. A permanent exclusion will be taken as a last resort.

A decision to suspend or exclude a pupil will be taken only:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, **and**
- If allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of others

Before deciding whether to suspend or exclude a pupil the Executive Leads / Headteacher will:

- Consider all the relevant facts and evidence, including whether the incident(s) leading to the suspension or exclusion were provoked
- Allow the pupil to give their version of events
- Consider if the pupil has special educational needs (SEN)

4. Definition

For the purposes of suspension or exclusions, school day is defined as any day on which there is a school session. Therefore, INSET or staff training days do not count as a school day.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Throughout this policy any reference to Headteacher may also include Executive Leads.

5.1 The Headteacher

Informing parents

The Headteacher will immediately provide the following information, in writing, to the parents of a suspended or excluded pupil:

- The reason(s) for the suspension or exclusion
- The length of a suspension or, for a permanent exclusion, the fact that it is permanent
- Information about parents' right to make representations about the suspension or exclusion to the Trust Board and how the pupil may be involved in this
- Where there is a legal requirement for the Trust Board or their representatives to meet to consider the reinstatement of a pupil, and that parents have a right to attend a meeting, be represented at a meeting (at their own expense) and to bring a friend

The Headteacher will also notify parents by the end of the afternoon session on the day their child is suspended that for the first 5 school days of a suspension, or until the start date of any alternative provision where this is earlier, parents are legally required to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without a good reason. Parents may be given a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted if they fail to do this.

If alternative provision is being arranged, the following information will be included when notifying parents of a suspension:

- The start date for any provision of full-time education that has been arranged
- The start and finish times of any such provision, including the times for morning and afternoon sessions, where relevant
- The address at which the provision will take place
- Any information required by the pupil to identify the person they should report to on the first day

Where this information on alternative provision is not reasonably ascertainable by the end of the afternoon session, it may be provided in a subsequent notice, but it will be provided no later than 48 hours before the provision is due to start. The only exception to this is where alternative provision is to be provided before the sixth day of a suspension, in which case the information can be provided with less than 48 hours' notice with parents' consent.

Informing the Trust Board and local authority

The Headteacher will immediately notify the Trust Board, the local authority (LA) and where appropriate the social worker and/or virtual schools headteacher (VSH) of:

- A suspension of any length of time
- A permanent exclusion, including when a suspension is made permanent
- Suspensions which would result in the pupil missing a public examination

For a permanent exclusion, if the pupil lives outside the LA in which the school is located, the Headteacher will also immediately inform the pupil's 'home authority' of the exclusion and the reason(s) for it without delay.

For all other exclusions, the Headteacher will notify the Trust Board and LA once a term.

5.2 The Trust Board / Pupil Discipline Committee

Responsibilities regarding suspensions or exclusions are delegated to the Trust Board's Pupil Discipline Committee. The pupil discipline committee is made up of Trustees and/or representatives from the School Advisory Committees across the MAT.

The Pupil Discipline Committee has a duty to consider the reinstatement of a suspended or excluded pupil (see section 6).

Within 14 days of receipt of a request, the Trust Board will provide the secretary of state with information about any suspensions or exclusions in the last 12 months.

For a suspension of more than 5 school days, the Trust Board will arrange suitable full-time education for the pupil. This provision will begin no later than the sixth day of the suspension.

5.3 The LA

For permanent exclusions, the LA is responsible for arranging suitable full-time education to begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

6. Considering the reinstatement of a pupil

The Headteacher may cancel any exclusion that has already begun, but this should only be done where it has not yet been reviewed by the Trust Board. Where an exclusion is cancelled, then:

- Parents, Trust Board, and the LA should be notified without delay and, if relevant, the social worker and VSH;
- Parents should be offered the opportunity to meet with the headteacher to discuss the circumstances that led to the exclusion being cancelled;
- Schools should report to the Trust board once per term on the number of exclusions which have been cancelled. This should include the circumstances and reasons for the cancellation enabling boards to have appropriate oversight and;
- The pupil should be allowed back into school.

The Pupil Discipline Committee will consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving the notice of the suspension or exclusion if:

- The exclusion is permanent
- It is a suspension which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of suspensions to more than 15 in a term
- It would result in a pupil missing a public examination

If requested to do so by parents, the Pupil Discipline Committee will consider the reinstatement of a suspended pupil within 50 school days of receiving notice of the suspension if the pupil would be suspended from school for more than 5 school days, but less than 15, in a single term.

Where a suspension would result in a pupil missing a public examination, the Pupil Discipline Committee will consider the reinstatement of the pupil before the date of the examination. If this is not practicable, the Committee will consider the suspension and decide whether or not to reinstate the pupil.

The Pupil Discipline Committee can either:

- Decline to reinstate the pupil, or
- Direct the reinstatement of the pupil immediately, or on a particular date

In reaching a decision, Committee will consider whether the suspension or exclusion was lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and whether the Headteacher followed their legal duties. They will decide whether or not a fact is true 'on the balance of probabilities', which differs from the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt', as well as any evidence that was presented in relation to the decision to suspend or exclude.

The following parties must be invited to a meeting of the Pupil Discipline Committee and allowed to make representations or share information:

- Parents (and, where requested, a representative or friend);
- The pupil if they are 18 years or over;
- The headteacher;
- A representative of the local authority (in the case of a maintained school or PRU)
- The child's social worker if the pupil has one; and
- The VSH if the child is LAC.

Minutes will be taken of the meeting, and a record of evidence considered kept. The outcome will also be recorded on the pupil's educational record.

The Pupil Discipline Committee will notify, in writing, the Headteacher, parents and the LA of its decision, along with reasons for its decision, without delay.

Where it is an exclusion, the Pupil Discipline Committee's decision will also include the following:

- The fact that it is permanent
- Notice of parents' right to ask for the decision to be reviewed by an independent review panel, and:
 - The date by which an application for an independent review must be made

- The name and address to whom an application for a review should be submitted
 - That any application should set out the grounds on which it is being made and that, where appropriate, reference to how the pupil's SEN are considered to be relevant to the exclusion
 - That, regardless of whether the excluded pupil has recognised SEN, parents have a right to require the [LA/academy trust] to appoint an SEN expert to attend the review
 - Details of the role of the SEN expert and that there would be no cost to parents for this appointment
 - That parents must make clear if they wish for an SEN expert to be appointed in any application for a review
 - That parents may, at their own expense, appoint someone to make written and/or oral representations to the panel, and parents may also bring a friend to the review
 - Where a social worker is present, the panel must have regard to any representation made by the social worker of how the pupil's experiences, needs, safeguarding risks and/or welfare may be relevant to the pupil's permanent exclusion.
 - Where a VSH is present, the panel must have regard to any representation made by the social worker of how any of the child's background, education and safeguarding needs were considered by the headteacher in the lead up to the permanent exclusion or relevant to the pupil's permanent exclusion.
- That if parents believe that the exclusion has occurred as a result of discrimination, they may make a claim under the Equality Act 2010 to the first-tier tribunal (special educational needs and disability), in the case of disability discrimination, or the county court, in the case of other forms of discrimination. A claim of discrimination made under these routes should be lodged within 6 months of the date on which the discrimination is alleged to have taken place.

7. An independent review

If parents apply for an independent review, the Trust will arrange for an independent panel to review the decision of the Pupil Discipline Committee not to reinstate an excluded pupil.

Applications for an independent review must be made within 15 school days of notice being given to the parents by the Pupil Discipline Committee of its decision to not reinstate a pupil.

A panel of 3 or 5 members will be constituted with representatives from each of the categories below. Where a 5-member panel is constituted, 2 members will come from the school governors category and 2 members will come from the Headteacher category.

- A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer
- School governors who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last 5 years, provided they have not been teachers or Headteachers during this time

- Headteachers or individuals who have been a Headteacher within the last 5 years. This can include Headteachers from within the Trust.

A person may **not** serve as a member of a review panel if they:

- Are a member, Trustee or School Advisory Committee Representative of the Academy Trust
- Are the Headteacher of the excluding school, or have held this position in the last 5 years
- Are an employee of the Academy Trust, or the excluding school (unless they are employed as a Headteacher at another school)
- Have, or at any time have had, any connection with the Academy Trust, school, School Advisory Committee, parents or pupil, or the incident leading to the exclusion, which might reasonably be taken to raise doubts about their impartiality
- Have not had the required training within the last 2 years (see appendix 1 for what training must cover)

A clerk will be appointed to the panel.

The independent panel will decide one of the following:

- Uphold the Pupil Discipline Committee's decision
- Recommend that the Trust Board reconsiders reinstatement
- Quash the Pupil Discipline Committee's decision and direct that they reconsider reinstatement (only when the decision is judged to be flawed)

The panel's decision can be decided by a majority vote. In the case of a tied decision, the chair has the casting vote.

8. School registers

A pupil's name will be removed from the school admissions register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of the exclusion panel's decision to not reinstate the pupil and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel

Where an application for an independent review has been made, the Trust Board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a pupil's name from the register.

Where alternative provision has been made for a suspended pupil and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where suspended pupils are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

9. Returning from a suspension

Following a suspension, a re-integration meeting will be held involving the pupil, parents, a member of senior staff and other staff, where appropriate.

The following measures may be implemented when a pupil returns from a suspension:

- Agreeing a behaviour contract
- Putting a pupil 'on report'
- Internal isolation
- Parents engaging in an Early Help Assessment

10. Off-Site Direction

Off-site direction is when a governing board of a maintained school requires a pupil to attend another education setting to improve their behaviour. Whilst the legislation does not apply to academies, they can arrange off-site provision for such purposes under their general powers. Where interventions or targeted support have not been successful in improving a pupil's behaviour, off-site direction should be used to arrange time-limited placements at an Alternative Provision (AP) or another mainstream school. During the off-site direction to another school, pupils must be dual registered.

Depending on the individual needs and circumstances of the pupil, off-site direction into AP can be full-time or a combination of part-time support in AP and continued mainstream education. A proposed maximum period of time should be discussed and agreed upon as part of the planning phase for an off-site direction. As part of planning, alternative options should be considered once the time limit has been reached, including a managed move on a permanent basis (if a pupil is in a mainstream school) upon review of the time-limited placement.

The Trust Board must keep the placement under review for as long as the requirement remains in effect and must decide following each review meeting as to whether the requirement should continue to have effect and, if so, for what period of time. The meeting should include arrangements for reviews, including how often the placement will be reviewed, when the first review will be and who should be involved in the reviews.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The Headteacher monitors the number of suspensions and exclusions every term and reports back to the Trust Board. They also liaise with the local authority to ensure there is suitable full-time education for suspended pupils.

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team every year and approved by the Trust Board.

12. Links with other policies

This suspensions and exclusions policy is linked to our

- Behaviour policy
- SEN policy and information report

Appendix 1: independent review panel training

The Trust must ensure that all members of an independent review panel and clerks have received training within the 2 years prior to the date of the review.

Training must have covered:

- The requirements of the primary legislation, regulations and statutory guidance governing suspensions and exclusions, which would include an understanding of how the principles applicable in an application for judicial review relate to the panel's decision making
- The need for the panel to observe procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice
- The role of the chair and the clerk of a review panel
- The duties of Headteachers, Trust Boards and those governing at local level and the panel under the Equality Act 2010
- The effect of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (acts of public authorities unlawful if not compatible with certain human rights) and the need to act in a manner compatible with human rights protected by that Act